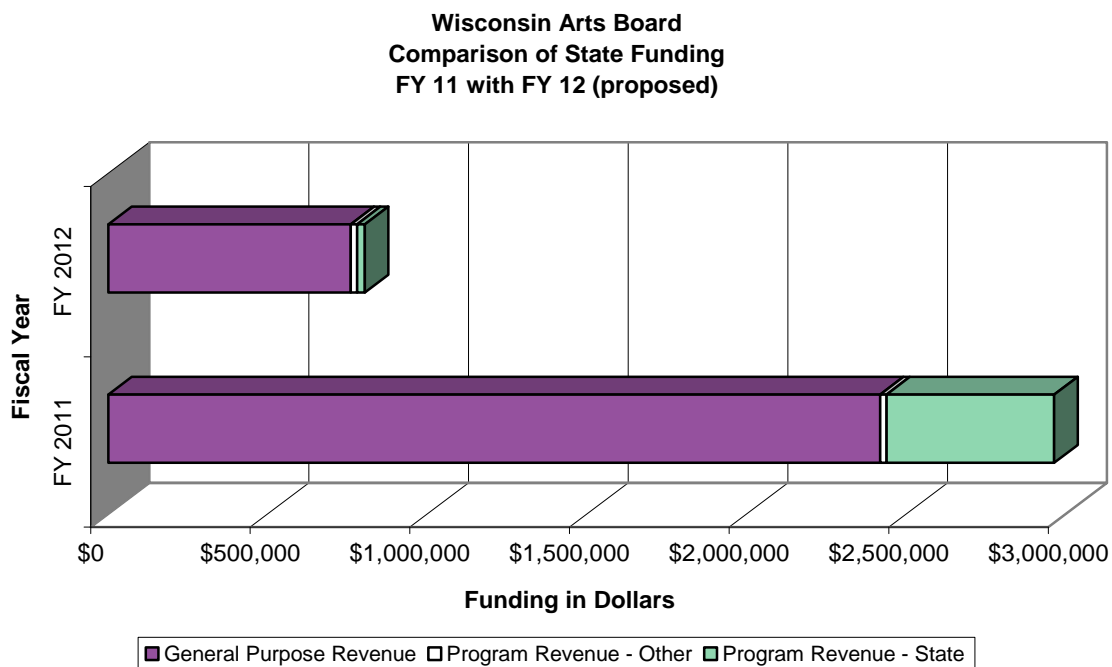




At its quarterly meeting in Milwaukee, March 11, 2011, the Wisconsin Arts Board discussed Governor Walker's budget proposal as it relates to the agency. Governor Walker proposes to dissolve the agency and then reconstitute it as a small program within the Department of Tourism with its budget attributed to Tourism's marketing budget. This move would radically decrease its granting capacity with a 73% cut to state funding and a staff reduction from 10 to 4 positions. While the Arts Board has been "attached" to Tourism for years and the partnership between the two agencies has always been strong, the agencies are not redundant in their mission or work. Both agencies fully understand the fundamental difference between supporting the development of thriving communities and community activities (Arts Board), and marketing them (Tourism).



The Wisconsin Arts Board understands the need for sacrifice to come from all corners when facing a state budget deficit of this magnitude, but the state cannot afford false economies. We will petition the legislative Joint Finance Committee and actively advocate with all members of the legislature to restore agency status and funding but impose a 10% cut to the agency's biennial budget to do our part to address the state's deficit. The WAB's budget is currently less than it was in 1992, ranking it 38th among the states in per capita funding. The Board advises restoration of the Percent for Art program for state buildings, but recommends the program be amended to hire only Wisconsin artists, in order to ensure that it contributes to job creation in our state.

The Arts Board is about jobs. To create 250,000 new jobs, Wisconsin needs the talented entrepreneurs and workforce necessary to incubate and attract businesses.

- The Wisconsin Arts Board plays an increasingly crucial role in economic development and job creation in Wisconsin and its contributions are not duplicated in any other state agency.
- WAB uniquely channels the state's investment to build and maintain its cultural infrastructure by providing both expert consultation and grants to communities in every part of the state. Under the governor's proposal, the state granting capacity will drop from over \$2 million to \$1,025,400 (\$500,900 from state and \$524,500 from federal funds), with radical impact statewide. In FY11, the ten person Arts Board staff provided over 10,000 hours in consulting expertise to Wisconsin's creative industries – its non-profit organizations and artists, its for-profit creative businesses, and its local governmental entities.
- That cultural infrastructure plays a crucial role in workforce and business recruitment and retention. A Wausau newspaper editor acknowledges that area tours to prospective physicians and executives begin at the Arts Block. Eau Claire drew two high-tech companies, Genesis10 and RAI Stone Group, with plans to add 200 high-paying jobs there because those businesses had confidence that they could attract the workforce they needed with the rich city's cultural offerings and quality of life.
- WAB is the only state agency providing leadership and support to develop the state's creative economy, one of the most dynamic sectors of the world economy with 14% annual growth rate. This sector represents at least 3.6% of total employment in Wisconsin. WAB provides national leadership to put Wisconsin at the helm of the National Creativity Network; works with local and regional economic development organizations to inventory their cultural assets and invest in the growth of their regional creative industries; and provided funding, intellectual capital and leadership on the Steering Committee for Milwaukee's *Creativity Works* in 2010.

The Arts Board is also about the vibrant, creative communities that are required to retain these workers and these jobs – and whose tax base contributes to the state's bottom line.

- A conservative analysis of the direct economic impact of Wisconsin's non-profit arts organizations and their audiences back in 2005 (numbers reflect only those organizations that answered the survey) showed that those organizations and their audiences generated over \$418 million in economic activity and provided in total more than 15,000 full-time jobs for Wisconsin.

- A groundbreaking study sponsored by the WAB revealed that the direct economic impact of artists and craftspeople in a ten-county rural northwestern Wisconsin area is more than \$32 million. Other rural regions are exploring plans to duplicate that study to guide their regional economic development decision-making.

The Arts Board is about growing Wisconsin's talented and innovative workforce that will one day move into these jobs and create new ones.

An education system that inspires imagination, creativity, and innovation is crucial to the development of those future workers and entrepreneurs.

- The WAB, in a nationally unique partnership with the Department of Public Instruction, led a *Task Force on the Arts and Creativity in Education* that has set in motion public/private/non-profit collaborations in nine Wisconsin communities. These collaborations work to better leverage a region or community's assets toward developing the creative capacities of its workforce, present and future. The WAB also catalyzed the development of a state science festival to inject creativity into STEM education.
- WAB consulting and grants foster economic resilience in stressful situations. Art-centered programs like WAB's *Phantom Art Galleries - Wisconsin* and Superior's *Backdoor Art* help draw the public and new business to a city center even as construction and other disruptions make it more difficult to navigate.
- The WAB uniquely convenes, advises and provides essential grant support to minority arts organizations as both an economic and education strategy for community and workforce development. \$84,500 of leveraging dollars would be lost to those organizations under the governor's proposal.
- The WAB's work plays a highly visible and central role in Wisconsin's brand with publications like *ArtWorks* and the *State Arts and Crafts Fair Directory*.
- WAB administers the Percent for Art program – more accurately the *Two Tenths of One Percent for Art Program* - which, although currently the smallest such state program in the nation, adds immeasurable value to state-owned buildings while promoting the careers of and employing Wisconsin artists and promoting their careers.

The Wisconsin Arts Board is about JOBS: to create 250,000 new jobs Wisconsin needs an independent, well funded agency.